

Negative Wycombe fail to change playing tactics

Enfield 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

WYCOMBE WANDERERS' match at Enfield fell well below the standard of football one can usually expect in the Isthmian League, as the current Amateur Cup holders took the points with a solitary goal.

Defensive tactics often produce negative and generally dull soccer and, on Saturday, Wycombe could certainly take the blame in this department. It was a far cry from the usual stirring clashes between these two great teams, both steeped in tradition.

Wanderers placed the accent on defence and a quick glance at the line-up soon revealed the plan of trying to contain Enfield.

Barry Baker filled the inside-right position with Keith Samuels returning, after missing three matches, at centre-forward. Both these players continually dropped back to strengthen the defence and, in fact, Baker often played his usual right-half role. It left only Horseman and Merrick lurking for the half-chance with Worley grafting from behind.

In theory the idea of trying to hold a team like Enfield away from home is fine, but Wycombe should adapt the tactics to suit the situation.

ENFIELD DICTATE

As the game progressed it was painfully obvious that Enfield were sadly below their usual form. And here is where Wycombe made a bad tactical error, instead of seizing the initiative they let the home side dictate the run of play. A more aggressive and positive approach may well have earned Wycombe a point if not two.

Enfield were allowed all the mid-field play but once they reached the Wanderers 18-yard box they met a wall of red shirts often nine or eight deep. When Enfield did manage to carve out an opening it was wasted. In fact the home forwards' finishing was atrocious.

The game was conducted at a leisurely tempo and although Maskell was constantly busy plucking out crosses he and his co-defenders never really looked troubled by the shot-shy Enfield attack.

Only on rare occasions did Wycombe threaten with any menace. Usually it was individual efforts which caught the eye rather than combined team work.

After 26 minutes the Wycombe rearguard made their first real mistake. Maskell threw the ball out straight to Day who crashed a first-time volley back into the net. Fortunately for Wanderers Connell was off-side.

Shortly after this Worley made a tremendous amount of ground which opened up the solid Enfield defence, but no one was able to reach his cross, until the ball was pushed back into the goal-mouth and Gale forced Wolstenholme to concede a corner with a flying save.

MORE VENOM

At the start of the second half Enfield moved forward showing a lot more venom and D'Arcy forced Maskell to his knees with a long range drive.

Enfield's right-back Gordon Sedgley continually overlapped on the right flank during the match and it was this move which finally ended the stalemate after 54 minutes.

Young Peter Eyres was slow to spot Sedgley moving up and could not get across to cover. Maskell being harassed by the 6ft. 3in. Ray Hill could only punch the ball away and Connell, standing on the edge of the box, rather cheekily screwed the ball home. His shot appeared to hit his shin rather than the boot—but it was sufficient to settle things.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; P. Roystone, P. Eyres; I. Rundie, V. Faulkner, C. Gale; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.